

As far as I am aware, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 still requires broadcast licensees to serve the public interest. Sinclair Broadcasting, represented by WPGH-TV and WCWB here in the Pittsburgh area, is obviously not concerned with the public interest. Airing a highly partisan documentary denigrating one of the candidates just a few weeks before a presidential election and calling it "news" is most probably in violation of FCC regulations, FEC laws, and possibly other laws and regulations. Violating all of these laws and regulations can't be in the public interest.

Of course, the bigger picture relates to media consolidation allowed by FCC rulings. There is so little local control of broadcasting. Because of legal mega-mergers, big corporations own the vast majority of stations in the country. The same corporations also own much of cable and direct satellite television, newspapers and magazines, and many web sites. The concentration of news-reporting entities in such a few hands denies the public interest more than any other factor. News is becoming more a way for corporations to serve their own needs rather than the public interest. Indeed, WPGH used to have a legitimate local news program. Sinclair has virtually dismantled its local news operation and replaced it mainly with an editorialist simulcasting from Sinclair's headquarters in Maryland. It is on all those bases that I must request that the licenses of WPGH and WCWB not be renewed. Sinclair has taken the power of media consolidation over the line.